

Legal Services: Strategies for Handling Children in Conflict with the Law Through the Mbolo Ra Dampa Local Wisdom-Based Restorative Justice House

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ABSTRACT

Based on accumulated data from Bima City's Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service, Child Protection Services, and Women and Children's Service Unit, it was shown that in 2021, there were 149 cases of children in conflict with the law. In 2022, there were 170 cases; in 2023, there were 159 cases; in 2024, there were 209 cases; and in 2025, there were 122 cases involving children facing legal problems as perpetrators, victims and witnesses. This study aims to produce and integrate legal services for children in conflict with the law through restorative justice based on the Mbolo Ra Dampa local wisdom. This was a type of empirical legal research, where the authors analyzed facts which were obtained from interviews and direct observation, using legislative, conceptual, and sociological approaches. Then, the authors analyzed primary legal materials (namely, relevant legal policies) and secondary legal materials (namely, legal publications, including books, legal dictionaries, and legal journals). The authors collected data through observation, field surveys, and interviews. Then, the authors conducted documentation, forum group discussion and additional data processing, data analysis through investigation, data verification, and data reduction. Lastly, the authors presented data related to legal services for handling children in conflict with the law through restorative justice based on the Mbolo Ra Dampa local wisdom. Findings indicate that, first, legal services in handling children in conflict with the law through restorative justice houses based on the Mbolo Ra Dampa local wisdom are centered in each sub-district in Bima City. This is a very strong tradition in the Bima community, as it maximizes the role of community leaders in each sub-district, making the sub-district government act as a facilitator to resolve children's problems. However, it still involves Child Protection Services, Women and Children's Service Unit, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service, and other institutions that support the resolution of this issue using a restorative justice approach. Second, the integration of the restorative justice approach based on the Mbolo Ra Dampa local wisdom of Bima citizens shows that restorative justice resolves the issue of children in conflict with the law by combining local wisdom traditions and restorative justice as an effort to create deliberation and consensus. However, it still encounters very serious obstacles, as the model of handling children in conflict with the law has not been optimally integrated, because the data on handling children in conflict with the law has not been properly recorded at the Bima City Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service, as the central legal service for children in conflict with the law in Bima City.

Keywords: service, children in conflict; restorative justice; local wisdom; Mbolo Ra Dampa

INTRODUCTION

Legal services are essential for children in conflict with the law, whether they are perpetrators, victims, or witnesses. Maximizing legal services for children requires a restorative justice approach that is based on the *Mbolo Ra Dampa*. Restorative justice for children in conflict with the law is problematic due to the existence of an unequal understanding. Local wisdom-based Restorative Justice Centers that exist in every sub-district in Bima City, Indonesia, can prevent children in conflict with the law from facing formal law enforcement processes. The problem-solving process simultaneously involves the victim and perpetrator.

Some problems related to this stem from juvenile delinquency and legal injustice. Dealing with children requires a *mbolo ro dampa* approach to reach agreements and manage other issues. This local wisdom involves those who are affected by the criminal action. The problem solving process involves the perpetrator, the victim, the perpetrator/victim's family, and other relevant parties. The restorative justice approach can be a strategy to handle criminal cases. Furthermore, it protects children, so that the juvenile justice process can be conducted outside the formal process.

So far, children's problems have been resolved using formal channels, but they have not worked well. This particularly includes children who commit crimes. Problem solving through restorative justice houses helps children in conflict with the law to avoid criminal stigma and recover from trauma. These houses show a real implementation of restorative justice. Legal services for juvenile cases through the restorative justice mechanism at the restorative justice house are based on the *Mbolo Ra Dampa* local wisdom, which contains the value of togetherness and prioritizes deliberation and consensus in resolving every problem to protect children.

The integration of the restorative justice approach with the *Mbolo Ra Dampa* local wisdom and legal services for children through the *Mbolo Ra Dampa* local wisdom-based restorative justice houses in every sub-district in Bima City is quite effective. This is because the *Mbolo Ra Dampa* tradition contains the value of togetherness. It prioritizes deliberation and consensus by involving all parties. In such cases, the village head serves as the facilitator to resolve these problems. The Restorative Justice House is an innovation that is expected to become a forum for community mediation. The purpose of deliberation is to restore the situation to how it was before the conflict happened. The Restorative Justice House explores local wisdom values by preserving legal culture.

As a media in resolving criminal cases, the restorative justice approach is fairer and more balanced. There are many alternative models for resolving legal problems, such as through restorative justice, mediation, and police discretion. At this time, the legal handling of children in conflict with the law brings special concerns, as children's interests are the main consideration. So, legal services must be carried out carefully. This condition is expected to integrate legal services to children in conflict with the law from various institutions that have the authority to handle child cases in Bima City. In dealing with juvenile criminal cases, the integration of various institutions is important. Based on the explanation above, this research aims to analyze the implementation of legal services for children in conflict with the law through the *Mbolo Ra Dampa* local wisdom-based restorative justice house in every sub-district in Bima City.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was empirical legal research, which used facts from the field which were obtained from results of both interviews and direct observation. The authors analyzed the restorative justice approach based on the *mbolo ra dampa* local wisdom of the Bima community using several approaches. First, the authors employed the legislative approach to understand the hierarchy and principles in laws and regulations. Second, the authors conducted the conceptual approach which is carried out by examining concepts, theories, and expert opinions related to the object of research. Third, the authors used the sociological approach, which used empirical facts, such as field data. The authors used primary and secondary legal materials. Primary legal materials consisted of relevant legal policies, while secondary legal materials comprise publications on law, including textbooks, legal dictionaries, legal journals, and court decisions.

The authors collected data through the following stages: observation, field surveys, interviews, documentation, and focus group discussion. The authors processed and analyzed the data using an interactive analysis technique. It was carried out by collecting data directly from respondents/policies or the community by means of investigation, data verification, data reduction and data presentation related to legal services for handling children in conflict with the law through the *Mbolo Ra Dampa* local wisdom-based restorative justice house in Bima City.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Restorative Justice-Based Legal Services in Handling Children in Conflict with the Law

The concept of restorative justice represents a form of justice that collectively places a primary emphasis on the needs of children as victims, society, and perpetrators. Therefore, restorative justice means a fair resolution involving the perpetrator, victim, family, and other parties involved in a crime, who collectively seek a resolution to the crime by emphasizing a restoration to the original state. In the handling of cases of children in conflict with the law, restorative justice acts as an effort to protect and provide legal services to children.

Providing legal services to children requires various approaches, one of which is the restorative justice approach, which is an effort to provide legal protection to children in conflict with the law, including juvenile perpetrators, victims, or witnesses. Restorative justice means maximizing deliberation and consensus in producing solutions to problems and in achieving mutual agreements. Because children are the future of the nation, they require special attention to ensure that they may grow into individuals without problems. Therefore, there is a need for guidance to overcome the legal problems that these children face. In such cases involving children, a restorative justice approach can be a more constructive and humane alternative.

Restorative justice essentially means that justice is no longer based on physical, psychological, or punitive retaliation. Instead, it provides support to victims and requires perpetrators to take responsibility in resolving problems with the help of family and community, especially based on local traditions. The implementation of the restorative justice mechanism is resolved through deliberation with a familial atmosphere, involving all parties, including officials, the child perpetrators and their families, the victims and their families, and witnesses, while taking children's rights based on prevailing values and norms in society into account. Therefore, legal services which handle children's cases through restorative justice have a very strong legal principle and guarantee legal protection for children in conflict with the law. This is so that children can grow well and avoid various negative stigmas against them.

In addition to using restorative justice, legal services for children in conflict with the law also use several terms, such as mediation and diversion. Although these are different terms, the goal to be achieved is the same, because these services provide discussion regarding the problems faced by children as perpetrators, victims and witnesses. These cases are to be resolved amicably by prioritizing the *mbolo ra dampa* local wisdom as a cultural instrument in resolving problems with a consideration of children's best interests. Thus, the interest of optimum children's growth and development is the main consideration in implementing restorative justice. This is so that the children can develop and are not considered criminals. This is the goal of the Juvenile Criminal Justice System and child protection services, both at the local and national levels. Restorative justice is the center of services for children in conflict with the law by paying attention to the integrated handling of children facing legal issues.

Legal Services for Handling Children in Conflict with the Law Through the *Mbolo Ra Dampa* Local Wisdom-Based Restorative Justice House

In every sub-district in Bima City, there is the *Mbolo Ra Dampa* local wisdom-based restorative justice house that aims to maximize legal services in handling children in conflict with the law. The *Mbolo Ro Dampa* tradition contains the value of togetherness and prioritizes consensus by involving perpetrators, victims, witnesses, as well as families and other parties. It is facilitated by the village head, which acts as a facilitator to resolve legal problems in Bima City. In addition to the restorative justice approach in each sub-district in Bima City, the Women and Children's Service Unit has also been formed. This unit also has a strategic role in handling children in conflict with the law through various approaches, such as mediation, deliberation, and consensus based on local wisdom. The local wisdom in this case is the culture of mutual respect and mutual cooperation, which reflects the cultural strength of Bima citizens.

Legal services for children in conflict with the law through a restorative justice approach are based in the village. In these services, the village head acts as the facilitator, but it also involves various parties that have a role in providing legal services to children in conflict with the law, such as the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service, the Women and Children's Service Unit Polres Bima, the Child Protection Services, etc. The involvement of these parties is an integral part of the village-based handling of children in conflict with the law, which uses a restorative justice approach combined with the local tradition of *mbolo ra dampa*. This is because the model for resolving cases of children in conflict with the law through a restorative justice approach requires the consent of the victim or the victim's family and the availability of instruments to resolve this issue. Legal services are a serious concern because children in conflict with the law must be protected by law. The concept of restorative justice is justice for children by compensating for losses resulting from actions committed by improving the best interests of the child.

Table 1. Number of Children in Conflict with the Law (as Perpetrators, Victims, and Witnesses) in the last 5 Years

No	Data source	Year					Total
		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	
1	Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service	50	73	46	56	22	247
2	Women and Children's Service Unit	-	-	-	48	27	75
3	Bima City Police Child Protection Services	99	97	113	105	73	487
		149	170	159	209	122	809

Source: Data processed from research on legal services in handling children in conflict with the law through restorative justice based on the Mbolo Ra Dampa local wisdom.

Based on several data and models of legal services for children above, it shows that restorative justice is always carried out by various institutions for children in conflict with the law. This is so that children in conflict with the law still obtain protection, also by using the Mbolo Ra Dampa local wisdom of the Bima City community. This local wisdom reflects a tradition of deliberation and consensus in discussing many things, including resolving problems of children in conflict with the law.

The village-based child care model relies on the Mbolo Ra Dampa local wisdom, a strong value principle for the Bima community. One way is to maximize the influence of community leaders in each village, so that the village government acts as a mediator or facilitator to resolve children's problems before taking legal action to officially report them. However, the village government still involves other parties, such as the Child Protection Services, Women and Children's Service Unit representatives from the Regional Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service, and other institutions.

The handling of children in conflict with the law in sub-districts using the restorative justice approach, as discussed above, shows that other institutions can be involved in seeking legal services for children in conflict with the law. This is also as explained in Law/11/2012/SPPA Article 1 clause (6), which states that restorative justice is a conflict resolution approach that involves the perpetrator, the victim, the victim's family, and other related parties to seek a fair solution. It is only conceptualized through the strength of the Bima community's local culture through the Mbolo Ra Dampa tradition to resolve various legal problems faced by children in this city.

The implementation of village-based restorative justice is an effort to maximize legal services for children, because so far, it has only been carried out formally through official legal processes, such as in police offices and the like. Meanwhile, children in conflict with the law are perpetrators, witnesses, and victims of criminal acts, who must be viewed comprehensively, both sociologically and psychologically. In handling children's cases, the Child Protection Services has the nature of providing assistance, protection, and services for children. In general, in resolving children's legal problems based on the local wisdom of the Bima community, mediation is continuously strived for, namely the application of the *Mbolo Ra Dampa* local wisdom, which involves various parties, such as parents, families, and community leaders at the location where the child's case occurred.

The restorative justice philosophy lies in the values of deliberation and substantial justice. In the deliberation, the decision-making process is a priority, including in deciding the resolution of problems of children in conflict with the law. By bringing together the parties, it provides a sense of justice, so as to fulfill the needs of all parties, namely the victims, perpetrators and witnesses. This is because the principle of justice is to respect human dignity and honor by orienting towards reconciliation, reintegration, and resocialization in resolving cases of children in conflict. As a form of child legal services, this process prioritizes recovery and togetherness to reach consensus based on the Bima community tradition, namely *mbolo ra dampa*.

The model for handling the problem of children (perpetrators, victims and witnesses) in conflict with the law from a restorative justice/diversion perspective is a mediation process that prioritizes consensus based on the *Mbolo ra impa* tradition in the Bima City community. This is certainly centered on data reported by the community to the police. This method brings great help in protecting the psychology of children in conflict with the law. This

is because legal services must be provided to children, even though in many cases, these issues that children face continue to the trial stage in court. In addition, deliberation through mediation between the victim and the perpetrator's family is a form of restorative justice. The third party is the Women and Children's Service Unit of the Police Force, which acts as a mediator and facilitator to bridge the two parties to reach an agreement with the aim of recovering all losses.

The law on the handling of children in conflict with the law through restorative justice houses based on the *mbolo ra dampa* local wisdom is generally formulated in the Juvenile Criminal Justice System. This system requires upholding restorative justice for children in conflict with the law to avoid negative impacts on the psychology and development of the children due to their involvement with the formal legal process of child criminal cases. However, in services for children in conflict with the law, the best interests of children are still considered as an effort to provide legal protection. So, mediation in resolving children's problems is an obligation that all parties must implement, including the village government, by relying on the *mbolo ra dampa* culture of the Bima community.

Thus, although the model for handling children in conflict with the law is carried out using various approaches, it has the same meaning, namely discussing children's problems to find solutions based on the interests of these children. This is to build character and protect children's mental health, because the spirit of child protection must be in line with the model for handling children in conflict with the law, considering that children's problems are currently a very serious problem in Bima City. Thus, restorative justice becomes an inseparable part of the spirit of child protection.

Integrating the Restorative Justice Approach and the *Mbolo Ra Dampa* Local Wisdom of Bima Citizens to Handle Children in Conflict with the Law

The integration of the restorative justice approach with the *Mbolo Ra Dampa* local wisdom of the community can be done through the Restorative Justice House as a forum for resolving the issue of children in conflict with the law. This resolution is based on community culture, where the values of local wisdom are explored with the aim of creating peace, harmony of life, maintaining balance, and preserving the legal culture of the Bima City community. However, until now, there are still obstacles due to a lack of an integrated model in handling children in conflict with the law. This is because the data on children in conflict with the law has not been recorded properly in one place at the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service of Bima City. In addition, various institutions which have the authority to handle such issues, such as the Women and Children's Service Unit of the Bima City Police, Child Protection Services, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service, and the Sub-District Women and Children's Service Unit Task Force, have not coordinated optimally in providing legal services to children. This happens even though the tradition of *mbolo ra dampa* is a cultural strength of the Bima community that should be utilized to resolve the current problem of juvenile delinquency. Thus, the integration of legal handling is actually very helpful in influencing the interpretation of restorative justice.

Another problem in integrating child handling through the restorative justice approach based on the *mbolo ra dampa* local wisdom of Bima City is the suboptimal local government policy in providing integrated services to several institutions that should jointly study the causes of children's problems and find solutions to resolve children in conflict with the law. Thus, the handling of problematic children cannot be carried out properly, because each institution relies on its own authority, which is only routine in nature, even though the cultural strength of the Bima community can be united through policies. For instance, the *Mbolo Ra Dampa* tradition can be used as a forum for integrating legal services in handling children in conflict with the law.

The handling of children in conflict with the law through a restorative justice approach in Bima City is not yet optimum. However, there are always efforts to resolve such cases amicably, because many of these children's cases have been resolved by the village government and Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service. These parties are involved in handling children in conflict with the law through deliberation and mediation. As the most important part in handling children's cases as perpetrators, victims, and witnesses, this deliberation and mediation is based on the *mbolo ra dampa* local wisdom of the Bima community, although its implementation so far has not always run smoothly due to the role of outside parties who provoke the problematic parties.

According to Law/11/2012, the resolution of cases of children in conflict with the law prioritizes alternative solutions, which are the basis of child protection. This approach is in line with the principles of human rights and the interests of children in conflict with the law. The restorative justice approach for children in conflict with the law is in accordance with the principles of child protection and restorative justice. Moreover, it is carried out based on local traditions, namely the *mbolo ra dampa* tradition as the strength of the Bima community. This *mbolo ra dampa* tradition is a tradition that can rebuild the bonds of brotherhood among the community as well as strengthens the sense of social solidarity among each other, so that people can help each other and live in harmony.

However, there are still obstacles in handling children in conflict with the law through restorative justice based on local wisdom, such as the lack of integration of child handling data between several institutions, such as the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service, Child Protection Services, and the Women and Children's Service Unit of the Bima City Police Force, especially child handling data in each sub-district in Bima City. This data integration is actually very important to provide legal protection for children in conflict with the law. Therefore, the lack of such information can hinder the pattern of handling children in conflict with the law, as the legal services are carried out in different ways. Moreover, in creating justice through a targeted and integrated child handling model, the concept of restorative justice can be combined with the *mbolo ra dampa* culture of the Bima community.

Based on various information on the model of handling children in conflict with the law, it shows that the handling of children in conflict with the law in Bima City is not well integrated. The data on child problems vary in the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service, the Women and Children's Service Unit, the Child Protection Services, and the Sub-District Women and Children's Service Task Force Unit. Children's cases continue to increase every year. Therefore, the restorative justice house must be a forum that unites views in solving child problems in Bima City, especially if it is done based on the *mbolo ra dampa* local wisdom that prioritizes the principle of togetherness and mutual respect in deliberation.

In addition to the implementation of restorative justice, the Women and Children's Service Unit also implement diversion in the juvenile criminal justice system, especially for children in conflict with the law, as an implementation of restorative justice. This is an effort to provide legal protection to children. However, many cases that are attempted to be resolved through mediation then fail. This mediation is certainly based on the standards for handling children as formulated in Law/11/2021/SPPA. Thus, criminal acts that are subject to a sentence of more than seven years are referred to the next stage.

The basis for handling children in conflict with the law at Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service is public reports, Child Protection Services data, and data requests from the Head of the Women and Children's Service Unit of the Bima City Police Force, as well as reports from the Women and Children's Service Unit Task Force in each sub-district. Based on official reports from the Women and Children's Service Unit of the Bima Police Force, many cases have been handled. Some have continued and reached trial, but many cases have also been resolved through amicable means, namely through diversion, mediation, and restorative justice. Quantitatively, this is very significant, but in terms of quality, cases show an increase in the quality of crimes committed by children as perpetrators and as victims. Juvenile perpetrators no longer commit mere juvenile delinquency actions but have entered criminal crimes like adults in general.

To create peace between children in conflict with the law and victims or their families, in carrying out investigative and prosecution duties, law enforcement should prioritize diversion as an alternative to guarantee protection for children. Although various efforts have been made, integrating legal services for children in conflict with the law has not been implemented properly, due to a lack of coordination between institutions. There is also a lack of data collection between institutions, causing delays in handling the issue of children in conflict with the law. Thus, the legal services are not optimal.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and analysis above, it can be concluded that first, legal services in handling children in conflict with the law through the *Mbolo Ra Dampa* local wisdom-based restorative justice house are located in every sub-district in Bima City. The model of handling children through the *Mbolo Ra Dampa* local wisdom-based restorative justice, based on local wisdom, is a very strong tradition in the Bima community. It includes maximizing the role of community leaders in each sub-district. Thus, the sub-district government acts as a mediator or facilitator to resolve children's problems. However, it still involves Child Protection Services, Women and Children's Service Unit, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service, and other institutions in assisting the resolution process using a restorative justice approach based on the *Mbolo Ra Dampa* local wisdom of the Bima community.

Second, the integration of the restorative justice approach with the *Mbolo Ra Dampa* local wisdom of the Bima City community shows that in resolving the issue of children in conflict with the law, there is a combination of local wisdom traditions with restorative justice to achieve deliberation and consensus. So far, this practice has encountered obstacles due to the lack of optimum integration of the model for handling children in conflict with the law. This is because the data on handling children in conflict with the law has not been well centralized at the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service of Bima City.

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